

Appl. No. 09/549,967
Amdt. dated June 24, 2004
Reply to Office Action of March 24, 2004

PATENT

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

STATUS OF THE APPLICATION

Claims 22-47 were pending in this application. Claims 22, 24, 25, 29-32, 35-38, 41-44, and 47 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Beikirch et al. (U.S. Patent 5,532,839, hereinafter "Beikirch"). Claim 23 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Beikirch, and further in view of well known prior art.

Claims 26-28, 33-34, 39-40, and 45-46 are deemed allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 22, 25, 28-29, 35, 41, and 47 have been amended. Claims 26-27, 33-34, 39-40, and 45-46 have been canceled without prejudice. New claims 48-50 have been added. No new matter has been added by the amendments. Claims 22-25, 28-32, 35-38, 41-44, and 47-50 remain pending in this application after entry of this amendment.

THE CLAIMS

Applicants submit that the examined claims are not anticipated or suggested by the cited references considered individually or in combination. However, solely for purposes of expedited prosecution of the application, Applicants have amended the independent claims to include features from dependent claims that the Examiner has indicated as allowable if written in independent form.

Accordingly, claim 25 has been amended to recite the features of claims 26 and 27 which have been indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claims 26 and 27 have subsequently been canceled without prejudice. Independent claims 22 and 47 have also been amended to include the features of claims 26 and 27.

Likewise, claim 29 has been amended to recite the features of claims 33 and 34 which have been indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claims 33 and 34 have subsequently been canceled without prejudice.

Claim 35 has been amended to recite the features of claims 39 and 40 which have been indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claims 39 and 40 have subsequently been canceled without prejudice.

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Claim 41 has been amended to recite the features of claims 45 and 46 which have been indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claims 45 and 46 have subsequently been canceled without prejudice.

Applicants thus submit that independent claims 22, 25, 29, 35, 41, and 47 are now in condition for allowance. Applicants further submit that dependent claims 23-24, 28, 30-32, 36-38, and 42-44 that depend on independent claims 22, 25, 29, 35, and 47 are also allowable for at least a similar rationale as discussed for allowing the independent claims, and others.

Applicants have added new claims 48-50. Claim 48 represents claim 28 (which has been identified as allowable by the Examiner if written in independent form) rewritten in independent form. New claims 49-50 also include the features recited in claim 28 that were deemed allowable. Applicants thus submit that new claims 48-50 are in a condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 650-326-2400.

Respectfully submitted,

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